

The Story of the Best Pilgrim

This book has been so far presenting different *ḥadīth* reports all of which combined to narrate different episodes of the Prophet's journey of Hajj. Yet, there is one *ḥadīth* report which compiles all these different episodes of the Prophet's Hajj journey in one complete narrative. This *ḥadīth* report describes the Prophet's journey of Hajj from the very moment it started to the very moment it ended, in such a manner that helps the reader live out the events exactly near to their vivid imagination, and as if they were right there with the Prophet (BPBUH) and his companions. This *ḥadīth* report has been a core primary source on the subject of Hajj, because it – as just mentioned – describes the Prophet's journey of Hajj with all its minute details. Different sections of this *ḥadīth* report – as narrated by Jābir Ibn Abdullah (ABPWH) – have been presented in different places throughout the entire book. The following lines however present this *ḥadīth* report again but with its complete text in one place, given its great importance for anyone who wants to study Hajj in Islam.

Jābir Ibn Abdullah (ABPWH) was once asked to talk about the Prophet's Hajj, he said:

The Prophet (BPBUH) stayed for nine years in Medina, during which he did not perform Hajj. In year 10 of the Islamic calendar, a call was made out in Medina that the Prophet (BPBUH) set a plan to perform Hajj. With such a call, many Muslims gushed forth to Medina from different places in order to join the Prophet (BPBUH) and follow his steps on this blessed journey. Therefore, we all made our provisions to go with the Prophet (BPBUH). Back then all Muslims got together at the Valley of Dhul-Ḥulayfa where the Hajj procession started moving towards Mecca.

At Dhul-Ḥulayfa, Lady Asmā' Bint 'Umayy (ABPWH) delivered a child and therefore experienced postnatal bleeding. The Prophet told her, "Take a bath, use a cloth menstrual pad to absorb the blood flow, and proclaim your intention to do Hajj."

Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) mounted al-Qaṣwā' (his she-camel) and proceeded until he reached a point facing the desert. I looked as far as I could ahead of the Prophet (BPBUH), and I saw people riding and walking as far as my eyes could reach. It was the same to the Prophet's right, left and back sides. The Prophet (BPBUH) was right there among us. He received Revelation from God, and he apprehended what he received.

We followed the Prophet (BPBUH) in all what he did. The Prophet (BPBUH) proclaimed God's unity, saying the following Hajj prayer:

Labbayka Allāhumma Labbayk! Labbayka Lā Sharīka Laka Labbayk! Inna Alhamda wan-Ni'mata Laka wal-Mulk Lā Sharīka Lak! (This means as follows: O God! I am here at Your Call! O God! You have no partners in worship. O God! Indeed, all praise and glory belong to You. Indeed, You have no partners!)

As we were following the Prophet (BPBUH) in repeating the same Hajj prayer, we made slight changes in its wording. The Prophet (BPBUH) did not object to such changes in the wording of such prayer, although he remained committed to his own way of saying it.

Our intention was mainly to perform Hajj; we knew nothing about 'umra. When we reached the Ka'ba, the Prophet (BPBUH) touched the Black Stone and made *tawāf* (going around the Ka'ba seven rounds); for the first three rounds of *tawāf*, he walked fast with close steps, and for the rest of the rounds, he walked normally. Next, he prayed behind the Station of Abraham, while reading Qur'ān 2:125, in which God teaches that the pilgrims to His House should pray at the Station of Abraham. The Prophet stood behind the Station of Abraham, where the Station was between him and the Ka'ba. Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) prayed two *rak'as* (units of prayer) there. He read Qur'ān 9 and 12 over the two *rak'as*. Having finished praying, the Prophet (BPBUH) went again to the Black Stone and touched it, then off to the Gate leading to the Hill of Ṣafa. As he was approaching Ṣafa Hill, the Prophet (BPBUH) recited Qur'ān 2:158, in which God taught that Ṣafa and Marwa were two symbols of the religion. Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) said, *"I start by what God taught."* So, he climbed to Ṣafa Hill going up as far as he could see the House of God (the Ka'ba). Then, he stopped high there, turned his face towards the prayer direction, and said the following prayer, *"There is no god but Allah alone, with no partner. Dominion is His and praise is to Him, He gives life and causes death, all good is in His hand, and He has power over everything. There is no god but Allah alone, with no partner. He kept His promise, gave His slave (i.e., Muḥammad) the victory, and routed the Confederates alone."*

He said this prayer three times. Then, he descended into the way to Marwa Hill. Low in the middle of the road to Marwa, the Prophet (BPBUH) ran. As the road to Marwa climbed up, he walked normally until he reached the top of Marwa. He then repeated what he did, on his way back to Ṣafa.

Having finished *sa'iyy* at Marwa Hill; i.e., walking between Ṣafa and Marwa

hills seven times, the Prophet (BPBUH) stopped up there for some time and said, *"If I had gone back in time and known what I am realizing now, I would not have brought my sacrificial animal with me. (I would have rather bought it from Mecca), and I would have then done my 'umra (and broke out of my state of Hajj until Hajj started, just like the pilgrims who did not bring with them their sacrificial animals). So, let anyone of you who has not brought their sacrificial animal with them do an 'umra (and end their state of Hajj until Hajj starts)."* Surāqa (ABPWH) asked the Prophet (BPBUH) about his discouragement for the pilgrim not to carry their sacrificial animal from home, hence not having to remain in the state of Hajj from the very beginning of the journey until its completion. Surāqa asked the Prophet (BPBUH) whether his discouragement was a privilege for them in particular or for all Muslims in general. The Prophet (BPBUH) crossed his fingers in each other and said to Surāqa, *"Hajj and 'umra have gone into each other, and my discouragement is for all Muslims."*

Ali (ABPWH) came from Yemen to Mecca for Hajj, and he was bringing along with him sacrificial animals for him and for the Prophet (BPBUH). Ali reunited with his wife Fāṭima there, as she was also attending Hajj with the Prophet (BPBUH). Ali saw Fāṭima wearing coloured clothes. She also scented the house with incense. Ali got upset because of how Fāṭima was breaking Hajj restrictions. When Fāṭima saw Ali upset, she said to him, "What is wrong? The Prophet (BPBUH) commanded his companions to end their state of Hajj (and become free from all Hajj restrictions) until later." Ali went to the Prophet (BPBUH) and complained of Fāṭima to him. The Prophet (BPBUH) said to Ali, *"Fāṭima is right, as she is allowed to stay free from Hajj restrictions as of now."* Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) asked Ali, *"What did you say Ali when you proclaimed your intention to do Hajj?"* Ali said that he said, "O God! I am here proclaiming my intention to do the same type of Hajj as that of the Prophet!" The Prophet (BPBUH) said to Ali, *"I am having with me my sacrificial animal. If you are going to follow me, then you are not allowed to end your state of Hajj."* (That meant Ali was not allowed to end his state of Hajj after he finished the 'umra until he sacrificed his animal on the 10th of Dhul-Hijja.) The total number of sacrificial animals that the Prophet (BPBUH) and Ali (ABPWH) brought along from Medina and Yemen respectively reached a hundred camels. All the pilgrims ended their state of Hajj temporarily, after they finished the 'umra and had haircuts, except for the Prophet (BPBUH) and whoever brought their sacrificial animals with them to Mecca (like Ali did).

On the eighth of Dhul-Hijja, the Prophet and we headed for Mina, where we started the great Hajj. At Mina, the Prophet (BPBUH) led the pilgrims in the daily five prayers including *zuhr* (noon), *'aṣr* (afternoon), *maghrib* (sunset), and *'ishā* (evening). In the following day, the Prophet (BPBUH) led the pilgrims in the *fajr* (early morning) prayer, and they all stayed there until sunrise. Then, he commanded that a tent is pitched for him in Namira (a place in the Plain of 'Arafa), where he went afterwards. On his way to 'Arafa, he had to pass through Muzdalifa, the valley located between Mina and 'Arafa. The pilgrims certainly thought that the Prophet (BPBUH) would camp in Muzdalifa, which was the tradition to follow in the pre-Islamic Hajj. However, the Prophet (BPBUH) passed Muzdalifa and kept going until he reached 'Arafa. In 'Arafa, the Prophet (BPBUH) stayed in the tent that was pitched for him. It was forenoon time, when he rode his camel and went to the bottom of the Plain of 'Arafa. There, he gave a speech to the crowds. He said:

O people! Your rights to life and property are as sacred and inviolable as this current day of this current month in this sacred city of Mecca. I declare that every sinful practice that is related to the pre-Islamic period of ignorance is abolished. Murders committed in the pre-Islamic days are to be left unavenged. The first claim to retribution for a pre-Islamic murder which I revoke is that of Ibn Rabī'a Ibn al-Hārith Ibn Abdul-Muṭṭalib, who was nursed by the tribe of the Banū Layth and was slain by the tribe of Banū Hudhayl. All usury-based transactions from the pre-Islamic period are also abolished, and the first transactions to be abolished in this regard are those belonging to my uncle al-'Abbās Ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. All the interests that are owed to my uncle are waived. O people! Fear God regarding women! Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under God's trust and with His permission. Your right over them is that they do not allow in your house a person whom you do not like. If they insist on doing that, then you may discipline them in a gentle way. Their right over you is to provide them with food and clothes, according to your means. I am leaving with you a thing which if you hold on to, you will never go astray; that is the Qur'ān. On the Day of Judgment, you will be asked if I have fulfilled my mission, and I wonder what you will say.

The companions said to the Prophet (BPBUH), "We bear witness that you have fulfilled your mission and done your part in showing us the way to God." The Prophet (BPBUH) then raised and lowered his index finger while he was saying, *"God! Be my witness over what they have said!"* The Prophet (BPBUH) said that three times.

Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) led the pilgrims in the *zuhr* (noon) and *'aṣr* (afternoon) prayers, combined, shortened, and done consecutively with no break in between. Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) rode his camel and made his way through the Plain of 'Arafa. At some point, he dismounted his camel and made her lay down, and he stayed there with the walking way ahead of him. He then turned towards the direction of prayer and kept praying to God until sunset.

With the sunset of 'Arafa, the Prophet (BPBUH) got on his she-camel and Usāma (ABPWH) rode with him. The Prophet (BPBUH) then pulled the rein of the camel so forcefully that its head touched the saddle. The camel got up, and the Prophet (BPBUH) waived his hand to the pilgrims to get ready for departure. He advised the pilgrims to move calmly and peacefully at a moderate pace. He said, "O people! Stay calm! Stay calm!" Whenever the Prophet (BPBUH) went through a steep upward trajectory, he slightly loosened the rein of his camel, so she could climb up. The Prophet (BPBUH) continued his march on until he reached the Valley of Muzdalifa, where he led his companions in the *maghrib* (sunset) and *'ishā* (evening) prayers combined and shortened, with no break between the two prayers. Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) stayed the night out there, until dawn.

Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) prayed the *fajr* (dawn) prayer in Muzdalifa. Then, he rode his she-camel and moved a bit until he reached al-Mash'ar al-Ḥarām (a place in Muzdalifa), where he faced the prayer direction and recited prayers to God. The Prophet (BPBUH) remained in this position, praying to God out there, until the daylight broke. Then, he marched towards Mina before the sun rose. He took al-Faḍl Ibn 'Abbās with him on his she-camel.

Al-Faḍl is said to be a handsome and fair-skinned lad, with neat hair. On the way to Mina, young women passed ahead of the Prophet (BPBUH) and al-Faḍl (ABPWH). The women looked beautiful, and al-Faḍl admired their beauty and kept looking at them. The Prophet (BPBUH) therefore turned al-Faḍl's face with his hand, trying to prevent him from watching the women.

The Prophet (BPBUH) continued on marching until he reached the Valley of Muḥassir. At this point, he urged his she-camel to go faster as he was passing through the middle road leading to the al-'Aqaba *jamra* wall, at which he threw seven pebbles. The size of each pebble was as small as a fingertip. With each pebble he threw, he was saying, "God is the Greatest". Then, he drew back to the heart of Mina where he offered his sacrificial animal. The Prophet (BPBUH) himself slaughtered 63 camels. Then, Ali (ABPWH) slaughtered

the rest of the camels. The Prophet (BPBUH) allowed Ali (ABPWH) to share these offerings with him. Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) commanded that some of the meat of every slaughtered camel be cooked. Then, he and Ali ate from the cooked meat and its soup.

Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) moved ahead to the Sacred House of God, where he made *tawāf* and prayed the *zuhr* (noon) prayer.

Then, the Prophet (BPBUH) went to the Zamzam water providers from among the people of Banū Abdel-Muṭṭalib, while they were serving water to the pilgrims. He greeted them saying, *"Keep up the good work Banū Abdel-Muṭṭalib! I would have come down and worked with you, but I am worried that if I did, the people would begin to compete with you over this privilege of serving the visitors of God's House."* The water providers then handed a drink of water to the Prophet (BPBUH). (Muslim 1218)

The Prophet Arrives Back in Medina

After this blessed journey of Hajj, the Prophet (BPBUH) returned to Medina. The Prophet (BPBUH) returned to Medina after he took his companions in a journey that nourished their souls and hearts; in this journey, he taught them knowledge, spirituality, and wisdom. In this journey, God's Name was celebrated and glorified far and wide, the worship of God alone gained a more solid ground, the truth of faith became more apparent, the teachings of religion were elaborated on, and the ethics of Islam were seen in practice.

The travelling Prophet (BPBUH) returned from this blessed journey after a month or so. It was a month like tens of years in terms of the great amount of knowledge and life experience revealed during it. The Prophet's Hajj was different from all the other expeditions that he went to in his life. Hajj was an expedition, but not a military one in which the Muslims fought enemies. Rather, the Prophet's Hajj was a peaceful safe journey, which aimed to affirm God's unity, revive the true faith in Him, and engineer a pious self. By the time the Prophet's Hajj took place, no more wars were needed as the Muslim power was growing triumphant, the religion was firmly established, and many countries were already conquered and added to the Muslim land. By the time of the Prophet's Hajj, Islam succeeded in enlightening people's minds, liberating their souls, healing their hearts, reawakening their consciousnesses, and opening their eyes.

The Prophet (BPBUH) went to Mecca to lead the Muslims in the Islamic obligation of Hajj. The Muslim pilgrims came from different parts of the

world to join the Prophet (BPBUH) on this journey and learn the rituals of Hajj and the teachings of the religion directly from him. On his part, the Prophet (BPBUH) was the best teacher, mentor, and role model. In this Hajj, the Prophet (BPBUH) bid farewell to his loving followers and asked them whether he fulfilled his mission, removed all sorts of confusion and doubt, and set the right path for them to walk through this life until they die. The Prophet (BPBUH) addressed the crowds saying:

I am leaving with you a thing which if you hold on to, you will never go astray after me; that is the Qur'ān. On the Day of Judgment, you will be asked if I have fulfilled my mission, and I wonder what you will say.

The crowds said to the Prophet (BPBUH) in one voice, "We bear witness that you have fulfilled your mission and done your part in showing us the way to God." The Prophet (BPBUH) then raised and lowered his index finger while he was saying, "God! Be my witness over what they have said!" He said that three times. (Muslim 1218)

In this blessed journey, God revealed the following verse to the Prophet (BPBUH) to teach it to his followers:

Today I have completed the religion for you, perfected My favour upon you, and have chosen Islam for you as the true way. (Qur'ān 5:3).

The crowds of Muslims were excitedly thrilled to be with the Prophet (BPBUH) in this blessed journey. They had the honour of accompanying the best pilgrim, the most pious worshipper, the most erudite teacher, and the truest friend; that was the Prophet (BPBUH). The Hajj with the Prophet (BPBUH) was a great opportunity for the Muslims back there to make needful provisions for the life here and the life hereafter. All the Muslims dressed the same kind of clothes, and they were excited to walk and accompany the Prophet (BPBUH) and to learn from him directly. They were fortunate to witness the Prophet's mannerism, see his looks, and join him on such a blessed parade to the House of God.

On his part, the Prophet (BPBUH) drew near to his followers who attended the Hajj with him; he greeted them, gave them smiles, taught them what they did not know, responded to their inquiries, was respectful to their elderly men and women, was kind to their youngsters, spared no effort in advising them and encouraging them continuously, walked among them like a normal person, never ignored anyone, was never harsh to anyone, never turned down anyone's request, and never turned anyone off. The people crowded around him. He

did not like that the crowds would be pushed away from him. Therefore, he rode his camel instead of walking, so that everyone could see him and hear his sweet words. On his camel, the Prophet (BPBUH) continued to speak to the crowds, and to bid his farewell to them, as he said:

Learn the rituals from me, for you never know; I may not perform pilgrimage again. (Muslim 1297 and Abū Na'īm in al-Mustakhraj 2995)

After the Prophet (BPBUH) and his companions completed the rituals, the Hajj parade became ready to march back to Medina. The whole Medina had been engulfed in love and longing for the return of the loved Prophet (BPBUH) who had been absent for a month or so. With the Prophet's return, Medina recovered its light, and joy prevailed all over the city. Unfortunately, such joy did not last for long after the Prophet's return. It was just a matter of two months and few days until the Prophet (BPBUH) left the world here and joined the world hereafter.

The Prophet (BPBUH) departed but his love remained in the hearts, minds, and souls of his followers. He departed but his legacy remained and still remains to guide all Muslims through this life. No matter however long time passes by, the Prophet's tradition remains present in our life and adaptable to our needs. Let those who follow the Prophet (BPBUH) and adhere to his way wait for endless blessings in this life and the life to come. In order to be a true lover of God Almighty, the Prophet (BPBUH) sets one condition that the Muslim must fulfill. He (BPBUH) said to his followers as told in the Qur'ān, *"If you truly love God, then follow me and God will love you and forgive you for your sins."* (Qur'ān 3:31) The Qur'ān also teaches us, *"Indeed! There has been for you in the Prophet an excellent model to follow if you really want to have good hope in God and to attain success in the Last Day."* (Qur'ān 33:21)

The Qur'ān also teaches, *"Whoever obeys God and His Prophet has truly achieved a great success."* (Qur'ān 33:71) May God's peace and blessings be upon the Prophet!

Visiting Medina

After the completion of their Hajj, the pilgrims to God's House are highly recommended to visit the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, where they should win the honour of worshipping there and visiting the Prophet's grave and the two graves of his two closest companions Abū Bakr (ABPWH) and 'Umar (ABPWH). Such a visit to Medina is a great opportunity that the pilgrim should not miss out on.